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ABSTRACT

A two-part study of community college transfer rates was conducted using data from community colleges nationwide and, specifically, in California. The dependent variables were institutional student credit rates, as measured by the percentages of first-time entering students completing 12 or more credits during a 4-year period; and institutional transfer rates, as measured by the percentage of students with 12 or more credits who transferred to senior institutions during a 4-year period. Environmental conditions found to explain 50% of the credit rate variations among 78 community colleges nationwide were high unemployment, high tuition, greater percentages of full-time faculty, and younger and full-time students. Environmental conditions found to explain 42% of the transfer rate variations in the same sample of colleges were high community income, formalized articulation and transfer mandates, low full-time equivalent expenditures per student, and greater percentages of full-time faculty and younger students. The second component of the study involved case studies of six California colleges representing high and low transfer institutions. Data sources included a questionnaire concerning organizational culture, governance, and climate; interviews with college staff; and document analyses. Faculty involvement in decision making, strong institutional commitment, a comprehensive liberal arts curriculum, and course articulation with senior colleges appeared to promote the transfer function. (Author/AC)

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